



2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

It's been a busy year for the Mirror Lake Watershed Association with many challenges and some happy successes. We are proud to report that due to our partnership with the Town and Village Boards, we have been able to see a law enacted that prohibits the use of unencapsulated polystyrene for dock flotation after the end of this year.

The swim dock at the public beach contained this type of polystyrene foam, but the dock was removed at the end of the 2022 summer season, and it appears that most, if not all of the private docks with unencapsulated foam flotation, have been replaced. This is great news because it means that the foam that eventually breaks down into tiny particles won't remain in the lake forever, threatening the health of fish, wildlife, and those who consume them.

A new speed limit of 5 mph has been implemented, and hydrofoils are now prohibited due to their potential to become a hazard for swimmers and non-motorized boaters.

The MLWA is also excited to announce our new Instagram account which we are using to raise awareness about issues we face throughout the year, but we also love sharing the awesome, natural beauty of this lake. Thank you, Trish Friedlander, for your help. Check it out, follow us, and share @mirrorlakewatershedassociation.

Keep reading to learn about the challenges ahead. We need everyone's help to protect Mirror Lake, this amazing asset in our midst!



Thanks for your support, Marcy Fagan, Chair

Photo Credit: Sage Bissell Ruttan

MLWA Board Officers: Marcy Fagan, *Chair*; Bill Billerman, *Vice Chair*; Denise Bujold, *Secretary*; Mark Wilcox, *Treasurer*

Sandy E. Bissell, Steve Detwiler, Nev Dunn, Georgia Jones, Buzz McGraw

Advisory Board: Sean Ayers, John Eldridge, Larry Master, Trish Friedlander

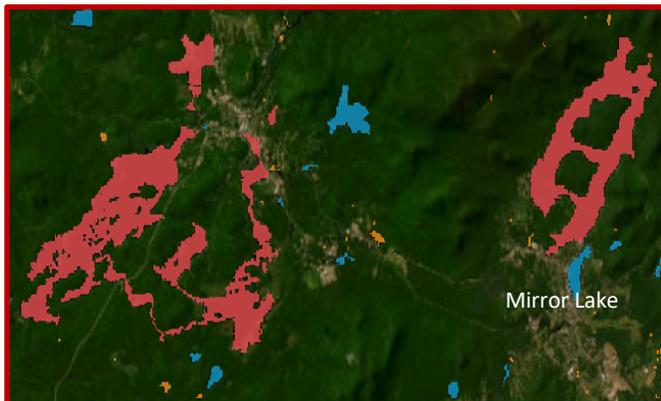
Prevention of Invasive Species & The Lake Steward Program



Besides salt, the biggest threat to the Mirror Lake Watershed is the introduction of invasive species. We are doing our best to counter this by educating the public about the dangers of invasive species and the importance of cleaning boat bottoms and fishing gear when moving between lakes. In 2023, this involved raising \$26,000 from various sources to pay the Adirondack Watershed Institute for trained water stewards to be stationed at the public beach boat launch eight hours a day, seven days a week from mid-June to the end of August.

After months of applying for grants and soliciting funds (from our village and town boards, our tourist organizations, Ironman USA, and local hotels), we finally collected the funds needed thanks to a very generous \$7,500 donation by Kevin Fountain who made up the shortfall. We are so grateful!

Although the water steward program is an expense that should rightly be paid for by tax dollars and tourism income, this is a necessity that previously has not been budgeted for by these entities because the ultimate degradation of our watershed and the resulting devaluation of our lake and its surrounding properties has not been fully appreciated. Most invasive species can at best be controlled, not eradicated, which is why prevention is critical.



Map of Nearby Lakes with Known Aquatic Invasive Species

Blue are lakes with no known observations of the 16 aquatic invasive species that we track. Red, are lakes with documented species present. The small orange shapes are small ponds that we have no records on. Eurasian Milfoil, Variable-leaf Milfoil, & Hydrilla Have Already Been Found in Neighboring Lakes.

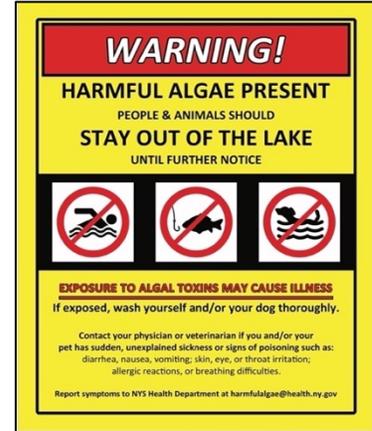
Map Credit: The Nature Conservancy's Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program

Road Salt For years, the MLWA has worked with the Town and Village Highway departments to reduce the amount of salt applied to the road surrounding Mirror Lake. Now, we are partnering with ADK Action on an outreach program to reduce the use of salt on driveways, sidewalks, and parking lots. The impact of salt overuse is far-reaching, affecting aquatic life, the lake's overall health, and birds and wildlife attracted to salt. We will work with snow plow contractors and caretakers, sharing new approaches that strike a balance between safe roads and responsible environmental practices.

Signs & A Response Plan for Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

Mirror Lake has experienced two Harmful Algal Blooms in the past three years. It is vital to warn the public as soon as possible if there is even suspicion of a HAB because they are toxic for people and can be lethal for dogs and wildlife. Lab verification of toxicity can take a few days so warning signs let people know that they, and their dogs, should stay out of the water, and children should not be allowed to play on the shoreline.

Devising a response plan has been an important project of the MLWA this year. We designed 16 x 20" warning signs that will be displayed in eight public areas (in the parks, the beach, and at the boat launches) until the water is safe again. We also devised a plan whereby we will coordinate with the Town and Village offices to get the signs out while we notify the Adirondack Watershed Institute and DEC. ROOST will be notified so they can inform the boat rental businesses and hotels.



Sunlight, warm temperatures, salinity, and nutrients such as those from run-off of lawn fertilizer all contribute to the formation of HABs. Learn to recognize HAB-like formations and be on the lookout, especially on warm fall days. Often, HABs are green in color and may have streaks, clumps, and mats. They can be as subtle-looking as specks of pollen or as obvious-looking as pea soup. Go to the Department of Conservation (DEC) and Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) websites to see photos of HABs. *(Photo of Mirror Lake HAB, Nov. 2022, Courtesy of AWI)*

Nuisance Canada Geese Those super-sized Canada geese who do not migrate far from here are still inhabiting our shores. They are attracted to handouts from well-intentioned folks, grass seed, and fertilized lawns. A single one of these birds produces 2 pounds of feces a day creating an awful mess and a serious health risk. To discourage them, allow native vegetation to grow up along the shoreline and forego the manicured lawn. In the meantime, shoo them away by clapping and waving your arms, and if necessary, opening an umbrella, facing the geese, to appear more threatening. With persistence, they get the idea.



Muck Boots On The Ground & Paddles In The Water

The MLWA has been fighting the spread of purple loosestrife and yellow flag iris for years. If left alone, these invasive species will crowd out native species permanently, destroying the biodiversity of our shorelines. In a single summer, Nev and Louise Dunn have been known to pull as many as 260 purple loosestrife plants. This is a big job! They also have been locating yellow flag iris for removal by the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program's trained scientists.

Litter: Regular Pickup & the Annual Dive Litter around the lake is a constant concern. Fishing lines, dog poop, food containers, beer cans, etc., it's a never-ending job trying to keep litter out of the lake. Each summer, we are lucky to have the help of Jim Grant, a certified diver and friend of the MLWA, who locates large items and removes smaller ones from the lake bottom. This year Jim found a concrete block with loosely wrapped cable attached, a concrete-filled culvert pipe, and a hot water tank on the far side of the new swim dock. We have notified the Village and are hoping they will remove it soon.



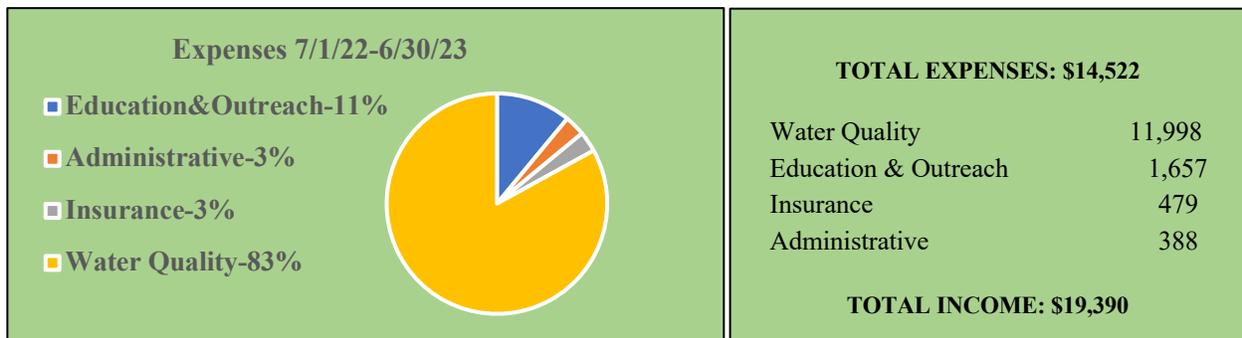
What is CSLAP? The Citizens' Statewide Lake Assessment Program is a cooperative effort between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the New York State Federation of Lake Associations (NYSFOLA). The program includes several hundred volunteers sampling over 260 lakes across the state. MLWA has participated in this program for 25 years which provides us with historical data for comparison purposes. For the past three years MLWA board member, Steve Detwiler (pictured at left), and board chair, Marcy Fagan, have been taking samples from

Mirror Lake and sending them off to be tested throughout the summer.



Photo Credit: Sage Bissell Ruttan

Adirondack Loon-Friendly Lake Program In the past year, MLWA has become responsible for Mirror Lake being certified as a loon-friendly lake by the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation. We have not found any evidence of nesting on Mirror Lake, but we know they visit and want to be sure we are doing all we can to make Mirror Lake hospitable to loons.



Mirror Lake Watershed Association

DONATIONS: The MLWA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, operated on a purely volunteer basis. We welcome donations of any size and invite you to become involved.

Address: PO Box 1300, Lake Placid, NY 12946 **Email:** mirrorlk@gmail.com

Website: www.mirrorlake.net **Instagram:** [@mirrorlakewatershedassociation](https://www.instagram.com/mirrorlakewatershedassociation)

Monthly Meetings: 2nd Monday of the Month at 5 PM, Peacock Park Beach House, **All Welcome!**